

BRAVO Zulu

BZs require an endorsement from the nominating squadron's CO and the appropriate CAG, wing commander or MAG commander. In the case of helo dets, the CO of the ship will suffice. A squadron zapper and a 5-by-7-inch photo of the entire crew should accompany the BZ nomination. Electronically-submitted photos must be at least 300 dpi. Please include a squadron telephone number so we can call with questions.

HMH-461

The crew of Ironhorse 11 had just finished their night mission as part of a squadron combat-readiness evaluation and was tanking from a KC-130 as they headed back to MCAS New River. Eighteen Marines from Fox Company 2/2, who had also participated in the exercise, were in the cabin. Ironhorse 11 was the second helicopter of the section and was plugging off the right hose. After taking on the fuel they needed for the trip home, the crew continued practice plugging with the tanker at 5,000 feet.

In the cabin, the crew chief, Sgt. Bruce, noticed a flicker on the edge of his night-vision goggles. He turned his head to get a better look and saw a cabin fire in the soundproofing. The fire was right above the embarked Marines and

was quickly spreading, spewing thick, black smoke.

The helo crew reacted. Sgt. Bruce reported the fire and helped the Marines unstrap. Cpl. Bell (the second crew chief) grabbed the nearest fire extinguisher. The HAC, Capt. Wingo, made an emergency breakaway, then descended as he called his lead and the tanker. Capt. Swicegood (the copilot) retracted the probe, went through the landing checklist, and switched the transponder to emergency squawk.

During the descent, the cabin crew used fire extinguishers to put out the fire before taking their normal positions by the windows to call the landing.

Capt. Swicegood completed the immediate-action items

and backed up Capt. Wingo on the near-autorotative descent.

The HAC chose an open, unlit field and landed. The crew began a normal shutdown, while Sgt. Bruce evacuated the 18 Marines out the ramp.

Postflight revealed that a plastic tie-tie on a wire bundle was not secured to the bulkhead and was resting on a fuel line. Over time, the tie-tie weakened the fuel line and created a pinhole leak, which quickly expanded, causing the fuel to spray on the bulkhead and soundproofing. The soundproofing section was destroyed, along with a seat the embarked Marines were using. Because of the crew's quick actions, however, none of the Marines was injured and damage to the helicopter was minimal.

Cpl. Joseph Bell
Sgt. Delray Bruce
Capt. David Swicegood
Capt. Carl Wingo





Lt. Todd Glasser
AW3 Todd Widdifield
Lt. Rich Reinauer

The crew of Hellfire 01 had launched from the USS *Chancellorsville* (CG 62) on a day-to-night SSC mission. Thirty minutes into the flight, they saw the No. 2 hydraulic reservoir's low-light. The

aircraft's leak-detection and isolation system shut down the equipment associated with the No. 2 hydraulic pump, including the hydraulic boost to the flight controls.

The nearest divert field was

more than 80 miles away, and the crew decided to make a small-deck, boost-off landing aboard the *Chancellorsville*.

The HAC (Lt. Reinauer) and his copilot (Lt. Glasser) worked together to control the helicopter. While AW3 Widdifield, the aircrewman, gave the pilots vectors and closure calls for a self-contained approach and landing.

HSL-51, Det 4



Lt. Michael T. Amos

While deployed aboard USS *John F. Kennedy* (CV 67) in the Red Sea, Lt. Amos launched on an FCF. As part of the profile, he had to separately shut down and restart each of his Hornet's engines. He completed the shut-down checks for the left engine, then restarted it. As he shut down the right engine, its hydraulic pressure decreased normally. However, Lt. Amos saw that the left engine's hydraulic pressure was also decreasing rapidly.

A complete loss of hydraulic pressure makes the FA-18's flight controls fail, which would have resulted in the loss of this aircraft.

With seconds before the Hornet became uncontrollable, Lt. Amos restarted the right engine, restoring hydraulic pressure to the aircraft.

Postflight inspection indicated the left engine's hydraulic pump had failed.

VFA-82